



## **August Focuses on Attention Deficit Disorder**

ADD is the most commonly diagnosed behavioral disorder of childhood. It affects about 3 - 5% of school aged children and is diagnosed much more often in boys than in girls. ADD may run in families, but it is not clear exactly what causes it. Whatever the cause may be, it seems to be set in motion early in life as the brain is developing. Imaging studies suggest that the brains of children with ADD are different from those of other children.

Depression, lack of sleep, learning disabilities, tic disorders, and behavior problems may be confused with, or appear with, ADD. Every child suspected of having ADD should be carefully examined by a doctor to rule out possible other conditions or reasons for the behavior.

The symptoms of ADD fall into three groups:

- Lack of attention (inattentiveness)
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsive behavior (impulsivity)

Some children with ADD primarily have the inattentive type. Others may have a combination of types. Too often, difficult children are incorrectly labeled with ADD. On the other hand, many children who do have ADD remain undiagnosed. In either case, related learning disabilities or mood problems are often missed. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued guidelines to bring more clarity to this issue.

For more information about ADD signs and tests, visit

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002518/>, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)\* webpage at <http://www.pica.army.mil/mwr/ACS/EFMP.htm> or contact the EFMP Manager, Marci Keck, at 973-724-2145 or [marci.keck@us.army.mil](mailto:marci.keck@us.army.mil).

*\*The Department of Defense EFMP is a mandatory enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, and educational, medical, and personnel services to Families with special/exceptional needs.*